



## HANDOUT **CAP-1**

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### **JOSEPH'S SITUATION**

**J**oseph has been doing well with his substance abuse goals, but he has been battling depression for a long time. His case manager finally persuaded Joseph to see a doctor. The case manager had to discuss this with Joseph for months, because Joseph is extremely nervous and apprehensive about seeing any kind of medical practitioner.

The doctor Joseph saw prescribed a medication for his depression. Within a day or two of starting the prescription, Joseph feels less depressed. But he also starts to experience some other uncomfortable sensations. Joseph's buddy tells him these are probably "side effects" — symptoms caused by the drug he's been prescribed. He tells Joseph he should go back to the doctor, and describe the side effects. Maybe the doctor can try another drug, or do something about the side effects. Joseph replies "Nah, I'm not going back there. I couldn't understand a thing the guy said. I never can. They make me feel like an idiot. I'll just stop taking the drug. I got by before without it."

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## **HANDOUT CAP-2**

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### ***SUMMARY GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING WITH AUTHORITIES AND PROFESSIONALS***

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#### **1. PLAN AHEAD**

- What are your objectives?
- What questions do you need answered?
- Talk to people you trust to get additional suggestions.
- Where is the office located?

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#### **2. BE CALM**

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#### **3. ASK YOUR QUESTIONS, AND INSIST ON ANSWERS YOU UNDERSTAND**

- Remember: the only stupid question is the one you don't ask.
- Don't be embarrassed to admit you don't understand.

## **HANDOUT CAP-3**

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### ***DETAILED GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING WITH AUTHORITIES AND PROFESSIONALS***

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#### **1. PLAN AHEAD**

- **What are your objectives?** Think about exactly why you are contacting the person, and make sure you can give the person you're seeing a clear statement about why you are seeing them (Example: I've been nauseated a lot since I started this prescription. Could the medication be causing my nausea?).
- **What questions do you need answered?** If you're trying to get information about programs or services, consider asking about:
  - Where services are provided
  - Times, dates, how often, how long
  - How you apply
  - Where you get application forms
  - If there are any costs.
- **Talk to people you trust to get additional suggestions.** Make notes (Examples: How long will this last? Is there another medication that won't have this effect on me? Are there any other side effects I might experience?).
- **Where is the office located?** If you're driving — find out where to park. If you're taking a bus — find out where the nearest stop is.

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#### **2. BE CALM**

- Give yourself time to find the office, park and get settled.
- Practice deep breathing, read a magazine — whatever techniques help you stay calm.
- When speaking with the authority or professional, keep your body language and tone of voice moderate, polite, but firm.



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### **3. ASK YOUR QUESTIONS, AND INSIST ON ANSWERS YOU UNDERSTAND**

- Remember: the only stupid question is the one you don't ask.
- Don't be embarrassed to admit you don't understand. Most people have trouble understanding the terms used by authorities and professionals. If you don't understand, say so calmly and politely, and ask the person to explain it again, or explain it more simply.
- When you think you understand, repeat it in your own words to make sure (So you're saying that I should call you in a week if the situation hasn't changed?)
- If you're getting a lot of information or are afraid you might not remember it all, make notes.
- Find out whom you should contact if you need more information. Is there a hotline, a Web site, etc?

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## **WORKSHEET CAP-4**

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### **INSTRUCTIONS**

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- 1.** All group members should work together to plan how to use the detailed guidelines to respond to a specific situation involving communicating with a professional or authority. You can use a real-life situation one of you has encountered, you can make up a situation, or you can use this one:

#### **SITUATION:**

Monty's case manager feels he needs individual counseling about some of his problems, in addition to participating in substance abuse programming. He gave Monty the name and number of a psychologist he thought Monty should see. When Monty tells his wife about this, she asks what it's all about, and what kind of counseling is involved... and Monty realizes he really doesn't know.

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- 2.** Write down details about your planning, so you can brief the rest of the class on the details.

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- 3.** If your group is using the situation above, prepare a role-play showing Monty interacting with the case manager to get the clarification he needs. If you've created another scenario, develop a role-play using the characters featured in your scenario.

Group members who are not acting in the role-play should serve as observers and suggest ways to improve the interaction.